

January 31, 2007

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives:

I am filing for your consideration the attached legislative proposal, entitled, "An Act Establishing the Commonwealth Corps."

This legislation would create the Commonwealth Corps, an organization that will provide Massachusetts residents with the opportunity to serve their communities through volunteer work for a year of their life, full-time or part-time. Corps members will be placed in nonprofit organizations or public entities throughout Massachusetts. By establishing a new paradigm for large-scale, locally-managed service projects, Massachusetts will lead the nation by renewing civic vitality while at the same time focusing volunteer resources to problem-solve.

This legislation would also create a pilot Commonwealth Student Corps, a program designed to maximize the spirit of volunteerism, engage students in their communities, identify the needs of the state, and replicate successful models. Research shows that community service-learning helps to meet the goal of education reform by improving student learning, enhancing student performance, and promoting the ethic of service. The Student Corps program will be administered by no more than 5 public colleges and universities. Participating students will be connected with service opportunities that complement their respective area of study.

Massachusetts has a strong history of volunteerism. Accordingly, I urge your early and favorable consideration of this bill to continue the tradition in this Commonwealth of community service and civic action.

Respectfully submitted,
Deval L. Patrick